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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: OS vs. Application Software: A Primer

OS vs. Application Software: A Primer

1. All computers start up (boot) by running operating system (OS) software. This software creates an environment in which useful work (word processing, page layout, image manipulation, web site creation, sound editing, etc.) is accomplished through the use of task specific applications running within the parameters established by the operating system.
2. An application can run correctly under an operating system only if the developers of the application software know the requirements dictated by the operating system.
3. A company which creates both the operating system and task specific applications has a distinct advantage over any competitor wishing to create a similar task specific product. The OS developer need not divulge all of its programming code to developers of competing applications. In fact, it may even incorporate, within its operating system, lines of code designed specifically to break a competing program.
4. The recent settlement between the government and Microsoft Corp. ignores these facts as well as the well established history of Microsoft's anti competitive and monopolistic tactics used to undermine applications such as Netscape Navigator and WordPerfect. These applications did the same work as Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Word. Each did its task far better than its Microsoft counterpart until Microsoft decided to "integrate" its own products into its Windows operating system. Neither Microsoft product could have become the de facto "standard" in its respective realm without this sham policy of "integration."
5. Any settlement which allows Microsoft to continue this blatantly monopolistic policy is ludicrous. Only one of two possible solutions would adequately address the underlying problem which led to the government's initial legal action against Microsoft:
 - a. To level the playing field, Microsoft would be required to release its entire Windows code to all software developers.
 - b. Microsoft would not be permitted to "integrate" any of its in house applications into its operating system, and sanctions sufficient to restore true competition within the software industry would be implemented against the company.

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